

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently Amended) An endoscope apparatus comprising:

an ~~remote controller which~~ endoscope body that has an elongated insert portion having flexibility and capable of being inserted into a space which is a target of inspection; ~~and a~~

a remote controller having a flexibly bending operation portion which operates a flexibly bending portion provided at the insert portion to be flexibly bent;

a manipulating device inserting channel which communicates between a distal opening end that opens at a distal end side of the insert portion of the endoscope body and a proximal opening end that opens at a proximal end of the insert portion of the endoscope body; and

a linking portion which detachably links ~~between the remote controller and~~ a peripheral portion at the proximal opening end of the manipulating device inserting channel ~~and the remote controller~~, wherein the linking portion disposes the proximal opening end of the manipulating device inserting channel at a position which does not interfere with an operating region of the flexibly bending operation portion in the remote controller in a state in which a link is established between the remote controller and the peripheral portion of the proximal opening end.

2. (Currently amended) ~~The An~~ endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the linking portion is disposed on a face of the remote controller that ~~which~~ is different from a face on which the flexibly bending operation portion of the remote controller is disposed.

3. (Currently amended) ~~The An~~ endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the linking portion is disposed on a side face of the remote controller.

4. (Currently amended) ~~The An~~ endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the linking portion is a fixing member fixed to one of at least the remote controller and the manipulating device inserting channel.

5. (Currently amended) ~~The An~~ endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the linking portion is a fixing device capable of linking ~~between~~ the remote controller and the peripheral portion of the proximal opening end at an arbitrary position of an axial direction of the insert portion.

6. (Currently amended) ~~The An~~ endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the manipulating device inserting channel is an incorporated channel incorporated in the insert portion.

7. (Currently amended) ~~The An~~ endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the manipulating device inserting channel is an external channel externally provided at the insert portion.

8. (Currently amended) ~~The An~~ endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the flexibly bending operation portion is a joystick which comprises an operating lever turnably supported at a proximal end portion via a turning fulcrum and generates a signal corresponding to a tilt angle of the operating lever.

9. (Currently amended) An endoscope apparatus comprising:  
an insert portion which includes a flexibly bending portion having flexibility, the flexibly bending portion being provided at a distal end side, into a space which is a target of inspection;

a manipulating device inserting channel which loads therein a predetermined manipulating device advancing from a proximal end side of the insert portion to a distal end side of the insert portion;

a flexible bending operation portion to flexibly bend the flexibly bending portion of the insert portion remotely by a rod portion operation; and

a connecting device which detachably mounts the flexible bending operation portion to the insert portion at the manipulating device inserting channel to make the flexible bending operation portion and the insert portion adjacent to each other, and links the flexible bending operation portion and the insert portion with each other such that an operating space of the rod portion operation and a loading space required for loading the predetermined manipulating device therein do not overlap each other.

10. (Currently amended) ~~The An~~ endoscope apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the connecting device is disposed on a face which is different from a face on which a rod portion of the flexible bending operation portion is disposed.

11. (Currently amended) ~~The An~~ endoscope apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the connecting device is disposed on a side face of the flexibly bending operation portion.

12. Cancelled

13. Cancelled

14. Cancelled

15. Cancelled

16. Cancelled

17. (Currently Amended) An endoscope apparatus comprising:

an elongated insert portion having flexibility, the elongated insert portion being inserted into a space which is a target of inspection;

an intermediate linking portion whose one end is linked with a proximal end side of the insert portion and whose other end is linked with a universal cable;

a controller ~~an input device~~ comprising a flexibly bending operation portion to operate a flexibly bending portion provided at the insert portion to be flexibly bent;

a manipulating device inserting channel which communicates between a distal opening end that opens at a distal end side of the insert portion and a proximal opening end that opens at the intermediate linking portion; and

a linking portion which detachably links the controller ~~input device~~ and the intermediate linking portion, wherein the linking portion disposes the proximal opening of the manipulating device inserting channel at a position which does not interfere with an operating region of the flexibly bending operation portion in the controller ~~input device~~ in a state in which a link is established between the controller ~~input device~~ and the intermediate linking portion.

18. (Currently amended) The ~~An~~ endoscope apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the linking portion is disposed on a face which is different from a face on which the flexibly bending operation portion of the controller ~~input device~~ is disposed.

19. (Currently amended) The ~~An~~ endoscope apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the linking portion is disposed on a side face of the controller ~~input device~~.

20. (Withdrawn) An endoscope apparatus comprising:

an elongated insert portion to be inserted into an object;

an intermediate linking portion whose one end is linked with a proximal end side of the insert portion and whose other end is linked with a universal cable; and

a connecting portion for detachably connecting both or any one of the insert portion and the intermediate linking portion to a portion to be mounted that is provided at any one of a mount tool at an operator's body side or a peripheral device.

21. (Withdrawn) An endoscope apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the connecting portion comprises:

a first connecting portion which mounts thereto any one of at least the insert portion and the intermediate linking portion; and a second connecting portion which is mounted on the portion to be mounted, and force line directions during an operation of mounting the first connecting portion and the second connecting portion are different from each other.

22. (Withdrawn) An endoscope apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the connecting portion has a linking portion which detachably links the first connecting portion and the second connecting portion with each other.

23. (New) An endoscope apparatus comprising:

an endoscope body including an elongated insert portion having flexibility and capable of being inserted into a space that is a target of inspection, the endoscope body further having a flexibly bending operation portion provided at the insert portion;

a remote controller including an operation portion operable to bend and drive the endoscope body;

an intermediate linking portion that communicates between a distal opening end of the insert portion and a proximal opening of the insert portion of the endoscope body, the intermediate linking portion having a manipulating device inserting channel that is open at both ends; and

a connecting device that is attached to the remote controller at a position where it does not interfere with an operating region of the operation portion and into

which the immediate linking portion is removably fit, the connecting device including a lock portion, into which the intermediate linking portion is removably fit, at a position where an insertion operating region of a manipulating device inserted through the proximal opening of the insert portion does not interfere with an operating region of the operation portion in the remote controller, when the intermediate linking portion is fitted into the connecting device attached to the remote controller.

24. (New) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the lock portion of the connecting device has at least two U-shaped grooves, into which the intermediate linking portion is fit.

25. (New) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the connecting device is disposed on a face which is different from a face on which the operation portion of the remote controller is disposed.

26. (New) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the connecting device is disposed on a side face of the operation portion.

27. (New) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the manipulating device inserting channel is an incorporated channel incorporated in the insert portion.

28. (New) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the manipulating device inserting channel is an external channel externally provided at the insert portion.

29. (New) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the operation portion is a joystick which is turnably supported about a fulcrum and generates a signal corresponding to a tilt angle of a peripheral portion.

30. (New) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the intermediate linking portion links the insert portion with a universal cable.

31. (New) The endoscope apparatus according to claim 23, further comprising a belt clamp configured to detachably hold the connecting device.